The
COMMONWEAL

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Editors: EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.
PHILIP BURNHAM (*now on duty with the armed forces*)
HARRY LORIN BINSSE, *Managing Editor;* MICHAEL WILLIAMS, *Special Editor;* C. G. PAULDING, *Literary Editor;* JOHN BRUBAKER, *Advertising Manager.*

Results Should Talk

THE LION'S share of armament and equipment orders has gone to the bigger firms; lack of orders, priorities and red tape are liquidating many smaller manufacturers. Aside from the injustice and inefficiency of such a course—and the smaller concerns should have been better organized to act in concert—it is molding an unfortunate pattern for post-war industrial America. Overcentralization and proletarianism go hand in hand.

This is bad enough, but now the danger is that agriculture is headed in a similar direction. Herbert W. Parisius, head of the Farm Production Administration, has resigned, reputedly because of disagreement with Secretary Wickard over the basic method of increasing food production. Mr. Parisius is in favor of expanding the work of the Farm Security Administration—the course favored by the Farmers Union. Through loans (92 percent paid up) and advisory services to small farmers, the FSA has achieved sizable results.

Take the increasingly important task of food production, for instance. Michael Straight's figures in the current *New Republic* show that the 8 percent of the American farmers helped by the FSA in 1942 "provided more than 54 percent of the increase in milk products, 32 percent of the increase in chickens; 33 percent of the increased production in beans. . . . The total production of beef increased 3 percent, the production of FSA borrowers rose by 45 percent." Courtenay Dinwiddie of the National Child Labor Committee estimates that these 463,000 FSA borrowers account for "36 percent of the total increase in milk produced by all the farmers in the United States; 10 percent of the total increase in production of chickens." Figures for all products make an imposing record.

Compare this with the AAA wing in the Department of Agriculture (and the three major agriculture groups which, despite the need of bigger and bigger food totals and the danger of inflation, continue to hold out for higher prices). Where the FSA has been increasing production and raising family living standards, their opponents have been engaged in trying to curtail production. Today the AAA-Farm Bloc formula for increasing production is to make commodity prices sky-high enough. What justification have they to offer? And how inflationary the nationwide effect of such a policy!

Yet this is the group everyone agrees is consolidating itself in the saddle. As *Business Week* puts it, "The little farmer can't depend on a Congress full of farmers to insure him a place in the wartime farm production job. Prospect for many small farmers is wages on a big farm. The farm bloc congressman weeps for the little farmer, but is not afraid of his vote. He knows that in the South the little farmer can't pay his poll tax and hence can't vote. He knows that in the rest of the country the major farm organizations have the whole farm vote in their pocket."

Who can aid the farmer then? All those who oppose overexpanded commodity prices and fight inflation; all who realize that for victory, actual expansion of our present food production is required; everyone who is concerned lest rural America itself becomes proletarianized. In the next few weeks members of Congress must be convinced that the new FSA appropriations must be as large or larger. Our battle against the Axis, and our ideal for post-war America, do not square with such political football as is now being played in Washington.

The New Isolationism

MANY SIGNS point to the development of a new American mentality of evil portent for the world's future. Time was when the instinctive public reaction in the United States to news of foreign disaster was a spontaneous movement of generosity. This war has produced an ominous change. Thus, when we are told that we must now help feed our allies, and that after the coming of victory, we shall have to help feed vast areas until they can once more approximate their former self-sufficiency, the traditional American attitude would be to accept this without a second thought. But 1943 America does not do so. Probably the

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majority does—let us hope so—but a very vocal and influential minority does not. Says Westbrook Pegler: "Any program of deliberate permanent impoverishment here for the benefit of the rest of the world will be defeated at the polls." And obviously, from the tone of what he writes, he inserted the adjective *permanent* merely to "cover" himself. No one suggests that we should permanently succor the world. "The United States did not enter this war to raise the living standards of the rest of the world but to protect this country and those living standards which Americans alone enjoyed." That represents the new isolationism, of which Mr. Pegler is by no means the only adherent.

Nor is it impossible that this attitude at least temporarily can win sufficient acceptance to affect national policy. Therefore a few words should be said, indicating exactly what it would mean.

In the modern world, with its rapid transportation and communications, you cannot sit in a remote earthly paradise, enjoying all good things, and expect your impoverished neighbor to rest content with envying you from afar. They know they can build the weapons to take from you what they want, especially as rich nations have always been notorious for their complacency. If, then, we propose to protect "those living standards which Americans alone enjoy," we shall have to maintain such a peacetime army and navy and airforce as we have never dreamed of. That costs money, and means a "permanent" tax burden which itself will destroy the very standards of living we seek to protect.

Can we suppose that the new isolationists will want to allow an influx of immigrants after the war? We cannot conceive that they will. So, with our own population leveling out to stability, perhaps even threatened with decrease, and with an increasing ill-balance between old and young, we shall sit, armed to the teeth, protecting our worldly goods, hated by all mankind, and more and more aware that the day must come when we shall be conquered and despoiled.

Not a pretty picture, is it? And perhaps you will think it exaggerated, yet it inevitably arises from the premise Mr. Pegler propounds.

We do not believe that in the long run such cynicism represents anything but an inverted angelism. It is not realistic. It is no more realistic than are the most wild-eyed of idealists and Utopians. For it denies all wisdom to men, and assumes that their only motives are selfishness and material gain. No more do we believe in this barnyard view of human nature than we believe in the sentimental acceptance of man's natural goodness. Yet it blossoms under a special appearance of "common sense," and that is what makes it dangerous—perilous to the welfare of our country, of mankind, and of souls.

The Chamber Has Improved

THE United States Chamber of Commerce has moved to a higher plane, seemingly well above the level it once occupied in chaste alliance with the National Association of Manufacturers. This is progress.

We gather these glad tidings from the lead article in the February issue of the *Reader's Digest,* "Your Stake in Capitalism," by Eric Johnston, president of the USCofC. The title is misleading. Most of us would disagree with Mr. Johnston's definition of capitalism, which seems to be a system in which business is "allowed to keep enough savings, enough profits, enough new capital to be able to go ahead into new investments, new adventures, new services." No sensible man objects to this, but what sensible men do object to is a much more essential quality of historic capitalism: the insistence of capitalists that they be allowed to keep an *unlimited* quantity of savings, profits, capital.

Let that pass, however. One can't very well expect a capitalist to repudiate capitalism. The amazing thing is that by implication Mr. Johnston very nearly unfrocks himself as a capitalist high priest by repudiating the real nature of the thing. For example, he recognizes the responsibility of business in failing to provide full employment in the days before the war and that it failed because of a lack of planning: heresy No. 1. He really seems to appreciate the stupid horror of unemployment, poverty, slums, etc.: heresy No. 2. He also recognizes the necessity of government stepping in where business has failed: heresy No. 3. He is opposed to "railing at the government," he is friendly toward labor leaders and sees that most of them don't want government to take over private industry, he seems to want capital and labor to cooperate more or less as equals: heresies Nos. 4, 5 and 6.

The *Reader's Digest* editors hint that Mr. Johnston is way ahead of the C. of C. Possibly the Chamber has privately excommunicated him, and is only biding its time until it can give him the sack discreet. A short cheer for Mr. Johnston.

Electoral Reform in Tennessee

THE STATE of Tennessee deserves congratulations for having put through what seems to be an excellent reform in its electoral laws. For one thing it has made uniform the system of registration throughout the state, and for another it has repealed the poll tax, thus not only making it possible for those too poor to pay this tax to participate in elections, but also discouraging the inevitable whittling down of the electorate which arises from the mere existence of a poll tax, and makes less effective the popular will of Negroes and whites alike.

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The Swiss

THE EXTRAORDINARY thing is that they were never tempted. It was almost that they seemed not to notice, that they seemed not to hear. They had their army everywhere along the border, and an army takes its orders from the people and their army is so much a part of the people that it might have taken orders from itself, but there was never any question but that the irrevocable order was to resist, there was not even any debate about the order to resist. It was almost as if the army—and the people—did not bother to make any calculations. The Staff must have counted the German divisions across the Rhine, there were people who climbed the cathedral tower in Basel to watch the German troops across the Rhine, but the army, the men of the army, did not bother to evaluate the German forces, the people did not bother to measure the German strength, because they knew the orders they had, the orders they had themselves given, and that they were to resist invasion. The people saw the Germans enter one country after another, the people saw the Germans go into France and thus complete the encirclement of their country, the people in Geneva saw German sentinels on three sides of their city, and it was that way in every frontier city and village: there were Germans and Italians everywhere beyond the frontiers of their country.

There was never any question, any doubt, any debate as to what they would do if attacked. The army and the people had made themselves as strong as they could, they had prepared their arms and their positions and their tactics as well as they could, they were ready to blow up the roads and the railroads and the tunnels through the mountains, they were prepared to fight in the mountains should they be driven from the plains. So that it was hardly worth bothering about to measure the strength that threatened them. (They had built houses with the proper slope of roof in the mountain villages and there was no way of predicting how much snow would fall, but they had made the strongest house they knew how to build and they would live in it through the winter. There was no question of leaving it.)

At some times more than at others it seemed to them likely that the Germans would demand passage through their territory. At the beginning of the war the Germans might have attempted to pass through their country rather than through the Lowlands. The German plan was something over which they had no control. The danger might seem more pressing at one time or another. It was a danger they could do nothing to avert. What they had done was to make up their minds—they had made up their minds centuries ago—that they would face any danger, not measuring it, at any time, in any place.

The Germans did not strike. There came a time when it seemed unnecessary for the Germans even to threaten to strike. That was when England was holding out, but alone and hard pressed. There came a time when many intelligent people all over Europe were saying it is all over for the time being, the war in Europe is over, the British Empire that is a different story, but in Europe it is all over, here is a region of coal and steel, here there is agriculture, here is a plan which arranges the whole thing, and if it is true that this plan has aspects which are extremely unpleasant, we will all have to work within the plan and in time we can amend the plan. There were intelligent people all over Europe who were saying you cannot disregard facts, the past is the past, the present is the present, and the future is the future. We must not resist the future. There were people all over Europe wallowing in platitudes.

The people of Switzerland were peculiarly well placed to hear all that was said. They spoke the languages. They could listen to Laval in French. They could listen to Mussolini in Italian. They could listen to the radio. They could listen to and understand Hitler's speeches. And in the event they might not care to listen, the Axis had emissaries, official and unofficial, a Minister in Bern, agents in Geneva and in Locarno, agents everywhere, to comment, explain, point out. The Swiss also could travel. The Swiss have always traveled and lived throughout Europe. The Swiss are in the Vatican; there are Swiss scientists, doctors, archeologists, merchants, here, there, and everywhere throughout Europe. There are Swiss families established in Russia and in France and in Germany and all over Europe. And all these Swiss could write home and tell what they heard, tell all about the new order. They could write home and say put away your soldiers, forget all about William Tell. The Swiss had every opportunity to know about the new order, they had every encouragement to cease being an anachronism.

That is the most extraordinary thing about the Swiss. They passed through that period in which the fate of Europe seemed settled, with a sort of innocence, as if they, who are most deeply engaged in Europe, were apart from Europe, as if they could not be touched or affected in any way in their hearts and in their customs and in their minds.

The situation has changed. The Swiss no longer hear voices accepting defeat; they hear a growing murmur of refusal, they hear all over Europe a new voice of hope. The extraordinary thing is that they never lost hope themselves, that they never even considered the possibility of yielding, that they did not even discuss whether to yield or not.

C. G. PAULDING.

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Cabeza de Vaca and Haniel Long

A remarkable book revivified in a remarkable way.

By **Harry Sylvester**

WRITING ABOUT Stephen Crane, Thomas Beer said: "The history of a triumph is always dull." It was, perhaps, the over-refined Beer's way of saying that, to people given enough time or calmness, the obvious triumph was not always such, but frequently something else. And it is hardly less than a cliché to add that the obvious defeat is not always such.

A little more than four hundred years ago, three Spaniards and a Negro, naked and starving, walked across North America. Warriors, Christians, adventurers, cruel and proud when they embarked from Cuba for Florida, they became weaponless, enslaved, humble, distrait, their food frequently not as good as that of animals. All that was left to them was their Christianity, which increased in them until they were mystics and possessed the power of saints. Their story was set down by one of them, Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, in a curious prose, without conscious implications, that today we might characterize as deadpan. And not the least curious of the things this war has brought is the increased sale of a small, unadvertised, practically unreviewed book written by a man named Haniel Long, designed to stress somewhat the implications of Cabeza de Vaca's own narrative and called "Interlinear to Cabeza de Vaca."

* * *

Haniel Long is a former English professor at Carnegie Tech whose verse and prose had the faculty of provoking arguments in publishing houses, although almost invariably he wound up by publishing the books himself, as he had to do with the "Interlinear." One of the books he had to publish himself was called "Pittsburgh Memoranda." Despite its not being backed by a commercial publishing house, the book was well received. Herschell Brickell wrote: "I have not read a book in many months that seemed to me so profoundly and genuinely American as this, or that made me feel the wisdom of the man behind it so unquestionably." The *New English Weekly* wrote: "There is a nobility of the mind that does not abdicate when it is confronted with a clash of moralities. Haniel Long recalls that nobility with his vision."

"Pittsburgh Memoranda," in a curious and beautiful weaving together of the actual words of actual men with the poetic comment of the author, told the terrible and bitter story of Pittsburgh, from Stephen Foster through Carnegie, Frick and John Brashear to R. B. Mellon testifying before the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce: "I would not be out there, way out in the mines."

But the big liberal publishing houses that published the big, liberal, well-known—God, how well-known!—authors of the '30's would not publish this book of Long's. The owner of at least one of these houses is allergic to anything religious, and maybe that had something to do with it. For Long was three things not often found in one man and least of all in the '30's: he was a Christian, he was highly articulate, he was a radical. Enough to give anyone pause, let alone the Pinkish literati of that time.

There is something of his own life in "Pittsburgh Memoranda." After his father, a Protestant missionary in Burma where Long was born, returned to this country, the family lived by choice among, ministering to, the poor of Pittsburgh. "The winter of that year was a bad winter," Long wrote in the "Memoranda." "My father took the pews out of the old church on Liberty Street so that more people could sleep there. I can't remember that he did much that winter except feed men, women and children. He had to hurry about, getting money to pay for the food." And later, in memory: ". . . the beautiful calm face of McKinley, the all-powerful all beneficent beautiful calm face of government and business united, promising us food."

* * *

Well, Long didn't even try to get the Interlinear published. If you add mysticism or its perception to the things Long manifested in "Pittsburgh Memoranda," it is perhaps evident why he didn't try. Long's friend, John Gould Fletcher, once said that Long, like the classic intellectual, was too much for the spectator, that he occasionally fled from reality. Long replied: "I fought the battle of Pittsburgh until they carried me from the field." This was literally true: he collapsed in class one day during the twentieth year of his teaching at Carnegie Tech. It was also how he came to write the Interlinear.

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He had visited New Mexico in 1924-25, liked it a great deal and read a lot of what had been written about it. The book that impressed him most was the "Naufragios" or "Shipwrecks," Cabeza de Vaca's own account of the journey to the Pacific as related in a report to the King of Spain. Leaving Pittsburgh for good, Long worked perhaps too long over the "Memoranda" after his illness, and his eyes failed him. For months on the edge of blindness, he thought more and more of Cabeza de Vaca's story. He was not the first to be deeply impressed by it. It has been translated into English at least twice, once by Mrs. Bandelier, the archeologist, once by Buckingham Smith. An edition of this latter translation, with many additions, was brought out in 1871 and edited by John Gilmary Shea. Long writes that he saw the story of the Spanish soldier, lost and naked and enslaved in the wilderness of sixteenth century America, "as a symbol of what decent people try to do with their lives," which is something of an understatement. He wrote down on scraps of paper the implications of the Spaniard's story—in this time Long was thinking of Cabeza de Vaca as an example of the adaptability of man to his environment—the story that, whether through training or design or lack of subtlety, Cabeza de Vaca had told apparently without conscious implications.

* * *

It is not a story that lends itself easily to a synopsis, and one condenses it here through necessity and not through choice. Cabeza de Vaca and three companions were the last survivors of the last expedition of the feckless Pamfilo de Narvaez. Of 580 men there remained these four after sickness, shipwreck, storm and the Indians finished with them. At times befriended, at other times enslaved, they lived among Indians who existed principally on sea-roots; among other Indians who, four months in the year, ate powdered straw. The Spaniards were without weapons, hitherto their greatest reliance, and of the four of them only the Negro, Estevanico, had anything resembling a sense of humor.

After years and while still slaves, they were asked one day to heal some Indians sick with spasms. They prayed over the Indians and healed them. Amazed and fearful, the Spaniards and the Negro began one of the strangest of journeys. One tribe of Indians would take them to the next, stripping that tribe of all its possessions in return for the presence of the healing strangers. Such a mixture of cupidity and mysticism has perhaps never been known.

There is a note of authenticity, as in certain other spiritually accurate books, in Cabeza de Vaca's own story. He tells the story, as I have said, dead-pan. It is to the King and, as Long points out, "it is the story of a disaster in Spanish Colonial history and the King's personal finances. Yet in the world of the individual it is a story of triumph." It is likely that Cabeza de Vaca told the story unwillingly, he being the surviving senior member of a military expedition, and certainly he could not have thought to endear himself to the King by interlarding his story with some gibberish about miracles and healing. Rather, the reverse. Yet he relates them and without comment. It was an age not much given to introspection, and Cabeza de Vaca, not highly intelligent and certainly not a trained writer, could hardly have given consciously to his words their weight of implication. As in the terrible irony of the ending when, approaching either southern California or northern Sonora, they were told that there were white men, Christians like themselves, just ahead on the coast. There, the healers found some Spaniards on a slave-catching expedition.

In the time of his near-blindness, Long thought a great deal about Cabeza de Vaca and the adaptibility of man to his environment. He wrote down the implications of the story, as he saw them, and published the book in 1936. It was never advertized and was reviewed only once, in *The Christian Register*. But its first printing brought him 120 letters and by 1939 it was in its third printing. Since we entered the war it has begun to sell even more than before, and it is perhaps worth while to try to ask ourselves why this is so.

Long thinks that the "Naufragios" "gives rise to the thought that the health and happiness of others is in our power and decision, to some degree that varies constantly with the situation and has multiple implications and forms. And after you've had this thought, you can never be quite easy again. . . . I feel it must be the thought that has caused such democracy as we attained in the world anywhere. As a conclusion it is logically inescapable and it is thoroughly Christian."

* * *

To Long, as to certain others, democracy is a spiritual matter and it seems reasonable to assume that it was so with some of the founding fathers, as I think Dr. James J. Walsh pointed out. What kind of Christian Haniel Long is I have never bothered to find out, although I have talked with him a number of times, and it is possible that Long makes out Cabeza de Vaca to be a heretic, although this does not seem so to me. It is merely that under the stress of hunger and enslavement and physical weakness, the Spanish warriors' conception of Christianity, of what is important, changes. They become concerned for people and the results are miraculous.

But these are some of the words Haniel Long interlineated, sometimes weaving them in with Cabeza de Vaca's own words:

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"The worst lay in parting little by little with the thoughts that clothe the soul of a European, and most of all of the idea that a man attains strength through dirk and dagger, and serving in your Majesty's guard. We had to surrender such fantasies . . .

". . . such were the scenes in which I found myself treating all human beings alike. I screw up my courage to confess it. . . . With a reasonable man and a timorous man and a carnal man as my companions and even part of me. And who is any of us, that without starvation he can go through the kingdoms of starvation."

"Our countrymen, these slave-catchers, were startled when they saw us approaching. Yet almost with their first words they began to recite their troubles. For many days they had been unable to find Indians to capture. They did not know what to do, and were on the point of starvation. The idea of enslaving our Indians occurred to them in due course, and they were vexed at us for preventing it. They had their interpreter make a fine speech. He told our Indians that we were as a matter of fact Christians too, but had gone astray for a long while, and were people of no luck and little heart. But the Christians on horseback were real Christians, and the lords of the land to be obeyed and served. Our Indians considered this point of view. They answered that the real Christians apparently lied, that we could not possibly be Christians. For we appeared out of sunrise, they out of sunset; we cured the sick, while they killed even the healthy; we went naked and barefoot, while they wore clothes, and rode horseback and stuck people with lances; we asked for nothing and gave away all we were given, while they never gave anybody anything and had no other aim than to steal.

"We regard our native land as a power which acts of itself and relieves us each of exertion . . . believing that our country replaces us each and several. . . . On the contrary the power of maintaining life in others lives within each of us, and from each of us does it recede when unused. It is a concentrated power. If you are not acquainted with it, your Majesty can have no inkling of what it is like, what it portends, or the way in which it slips from one. In the name of God, your Majesty, farewell."

* * *

Well, you can take or leave the healing and there are many people who do not take it. Yet the book has attracted and deeply interested people as various as Harvard professors and Benedictine nuns; Presbyterian ministers and grammar school teachers; historians and novelists. They have compared the words to those of Roger Williams and to those of Saint John of the Cross. So that it is not too much to say, perhaps, that Long has written a book—it is only a few thousand words in length—which may be included with those very few books combining an authentic mysticism with a universal appeal.

Like most of his books—"Walt Whitman and the Springs of Courage," which Mark Van Doren thought was the best book done on Whitman; "Notes Toward a New Mythology," etc.—Long has had to publish much of his own verse. But there are those who see in him also one of the finest of contemporary American lyricists. Here are two poems from a recently-published chapbook of his, called "French Soldier: Home From Being a War Prisoner."

The Religious Renaissance Before the War

What was that eager, mystic growth in us,
Why did it not include the central core?
Alas, we had taken the Citizen away,
Who had the most important part to play;
And so, with no North left to polarize us,
Our compass spun and fluttered wild and broke.
We searched ourselves, we found new paths and visions;
But politics we left to politicians.

His France

You are my body and substance, France,
  You are my breath,
And my songs are all of you—
  With a few of death—

For you are the Tree of my life,
  And the Tree of my dying,
Of the stifled heart in my breast
  In the long nights crying.

Long lives quietly with his wife in Santa Fe near the *Acequia Madre* or mother-ditch that waters in the summer the gardens of himself and his Spanish neighbors. He avoids the "art" life of that town, although he was one of the founders of Writers Editions, the cooperative press that has published some of his books. Of special interest to COMMONWEAL readers is that, in his efforts to find Spanish natives of New Mexico who were articulate, Long published the first verse of the Franciscan muralist, Fray Angelico Chavez, now a close friend. Last fall, in spite of bad health, Long was one of a group of liberal Democrats who joined with the Republicans to turn out of office a corrupt Democratic administration that had been in power in Santa Fe for twelve years.

Unable recently to get what he considered suitable paper to make a fourth printing of the "Interlinear," Long turned the book over to a national publisher, who will bring it out this spring. Perhaps the principal thing in Cabeza de Vaca's own story is how a Christian may come of age. There are a few hopeful souls who have seen Christians coming of age in this country, and it is perhaps not impossible that Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca and Haniel Long may be able to assist in the process.

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Labor's Chances Look Bad

Things change rapidly in a world in flux and conflict.

By John C. Cort

ONCE upon a time there were two American soldiers in the same fox-hole. One of them, Private Tillinghast, was young and full of energy and idealism, impulsive, a bit on the radical side. The other was an older man, Private Cuff, kind of a Wallace Beery type without the smile, inclined toward fat and easy living, a little corrupt around the edges, but not a bad guy at heart, good to his mother, and usually reliable in the clutch.

They were defending an important sector of the American lines, and they were faced with a dangerous, formidable foe. It seemed like suicide or insanity, or both, when one day they got into a terrible argument over the comparative merits of rifles and machine guns, and so bad it got that they wound up by climbing into separate fox-holes and taking pot-shots at each other as well as at the enemy. Fortunately the rest of the army was doing well at this point and the enemy had to retreat. But a few years later the enemy launched a successful counter-attack, and a new and far more dangerous enemy sprang up on the flank, threatening both forces. Things looked bad. So in December, 1942, Privates Tillinghast (CIO) and Cuff (AFL) had a few meetings with a view to consolidating their strength. Nothing much came of it, however, except that they agreed that maybe they wouldn't shoot at each other any more.

Seems silly, doesn't it? And very tragic.

Most of the experts, the smart money, would tell you that this is a feeble parable and doesn't give an accurate picture of the labor situation at all. They would tell you about all the complicated angles, the jurisdictional disputes and power politics and job jealousy and conservative-craft vs. progressive-industrial mentalities. But the complex angles are surface angles. A parable should deal with fundamentals, and that is our intention.

The parable is in terms of warfare, which means that we still have a class war on our hands in addition to that other, bigger war. No one regrets this more than ourselves, and certainly it is not by choice of the working class. The employing class is still on the attack, as the following digest of recent news should indicate.

In November, 1942, the Republican Party won a victory at the polls, and the reactionaries of both parties won majorities in both houses of Congress and on most of the important committees. In December another group of Americans met in New York, the National Association of Manufacturers, the big chief reactionaries, and Mr. C. M. Chester, chairman of General Foods and a former NAM president, said: "The silver lining of the war control situation seems to be that the economic planners will not play a return engagement after the war." Or in other words, boys, we, the economic anarchists and monopolists, will play a return engagement.

Then another ex-president, Mr. Witherow, stood upon his feet and made the famous speech about "we're not fighting this war for a quart of milk for every Hottentot or TVA's on the Danube," a cute remark and loaded with sinister overtones. And then the whole gang passed a war program that contained 26 points, of which six attacked labor abuses, ten attacked government interference, the rest suggested ways management could contribute to the war effort (for this we are grateful) and absolutely none mentioned the possibility that management could contribute either an improved labor policy or an improved policy on any aspect of wages, prices and profits. To this cheerful little earful they tacked on a list of post-war objectives, all of which demanded or implied relaxation of economic controls and not one of which implied the retention of any control at all or the creation of any form of self-control.

Cut through the plausible double-talk, all the "phoney baloney" so dear to the heart of American business, and you have here a gruesome little blueprint for the World of Tomorrow as envisioned by the mentality that now dominates Congress and that will completely dominate national policy if the Republicans win in 1944. "The good old days are on the way back, boys! Cash will be king once again!" That is the spirit that filled the sacred halls of the Waldorf-Astoria last December. As Monsignor Ryan and others have pointed out, the monarchs of American industry, like the old Bourbons, "have learned nothing and forgotten nothing." These men are the pillars of that social order which the Holy Father, Pius XII, again repudiated in his moving Christmas message as having "given such tragic proof of its ineptitude as a factor for the good of the people."

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And Monsignor Ryan has also warned us that if they are allowed to run post-war America, this unfortunate country is due for another economic binge and then a hangover (depression) that will make the 1930's look like a bed of roses.

In the face of this crisis does the American workingman realize what the score is, what potential disaster threatens his future? Not on your tintype. Even his leaders don't seem to realize it. A few weeks ago officials of a CIO local in a West Coast shipyard were responsible for a short, silly strike that nevertheless disorganized troop movements and delayed convoys loaded with men and war materials. It is impossible to deny the charge of the labor-baiters that the men responsible for this are guilty of nothing less than material treason. Though some may have done so, we have not yet heard of any high CIO official who has either verbally or otherwise blasted, attacked or criticized this action. Then there was the completely screwy, irresponsible strike of 16,000 anthracite miners over the piddling matter of 50-cents-a-month dues increase. And the great John L. Lewis didn't care enough about it to risk his prestige by going to the strike area and trying to get the men back to work. One strike leader protested that they were fighting for a principle, not for the 50 cents a month. A noble sentiment, brother, but what about the principle of elementary patriotism? What about the principle of a decent regard for the public welfare or the future security of your fellow workers?

It is no wonder that the Gallup Poll reports that 81 per cent of the American people are in favor of outlawing strikes in war industries. Actually, labor's strike record since Pearl Harbor has been very good, taken on the whole. At least 99 per cent of the workers, 99 per cent of the labor leaders have been working hard to keep production rolling. It is tragic and maddening that all must suffer for the sins of a few, but for that very reason it is way past time that our labor big shots got around to doing a job, publicly and openly, on the next bunch of zanies who try to play Hitler's game, with or without a principle.

Another angle: reports from the army camps reveal that the soldiers are getting plenty hot about the things they hear from the home front. According to *The Wage Earner,* organ of ACTU-Detroit, one trade unionist writes from Fort Custer that the men there are "pretty bitter against the 'Defense Worker,' a sort of typical figure who makes $190 a week, takes a day off whenever he feels like it, goes out on strike when a foreman gives him a dirty look and enjoys the comforts of a family and home every evening." Another union man writes from a southern camp: "Lots of anti-union feeling in the army. . . . I engage in at least three verbal battles every day, all indecisive." And the boys on New Guinea and Guadalcanal can't be expected to like that story about the delayed convoys. It is the easiest thing in the world to imagine an army of men returning home after the war, bitter against everything that trade unions stand for, perfect material for a fascist putsch.

Obstacles to labor unity

So much for the dangers. It is the opinion in this corner that the only thing that can forestall them is a strong, organically united labor movement that will throw even more weight behind the war effort, and against those who impede it, and much more weight behind the New Deal forces in the Democratic Party. This being so, let's take up the obstacles to labor unity, all the complicated angles the experts talk about. Number 1: as Sidney Hillman said in his impassioned plea for unity at the CIO convention in November: "A few jurisdictional squabbles—what do they amount to?" The worst right now is the Kaiser shipyard thing. Fortunately, on January 22 the AFL finally got around to okaying the arbitration machinery agreed to by the combined AFL-CIO peace committee on December 2, 1942, and this squabble should be ironed out soon. Actually, there aren't so many fields where both organizations come into conflict. The AFL's main strength is in building trades and trucking, while the CIO is strongest among the semi-skilled workers of big industry. There is conflict in the shipyards and in aircraft, but the CIO unions in these fields are under sound leadership, and this should be easily soluble. It will be a little more difficult in the electrical and radio industry, where the communists control their only big CIO union, having ousted Jim Carey (still secretary of the CIO, however) by a close vote at the 1941 convention.

A more serious hurdle is the problem of jobs and prestige. When two organizations merge, you may find jobs for everyone, but somebody has to take a cut in power and glory. This is something inevitable, something with roots deep in human nature, but it can certainly be overcome. An easier hurdle, but one that has been made into a veritable Great Wall of China, is the question of numerical inequality. The AFL announces now that it has a paid-up membership of 5,954,434 as of December 31, which is a new all-time high. Before last October the CIO was claiming something over 5,000,000 members, but in that month John L. Lewis withdrew his 600,000 miners, allegedly to promote labor unity, a connection which few could trace, since by that withdrawal he seriously weakened the CIO's hand and, incidentally, dug a nice deep grave for his own future influence in the labor movement.

So now the AFL gloats and talks nonsense about: "How can the CIO expect to be recognized as an equal in unity negotiations?" The CIO has

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no very convincing answer because it too suffers from what Father Monaghan calls the favorite heresy of Americans: the heresy of numbers. In reality there are excellent answers lying all over the place. To begin with, the CIO is not only the equal, but the superior of the AFL in the things that count more than numbers: brains, energy, honesty, idealism. If the present leaders of the AFL had carried the day in 1935, the American labor movement would still be back in the Stone Age, as impotent and despised as it was then.

And furthermore, if the AFL wants to talk figures, the fact is that they owe perhaps two million of their own membership to the militant organizing activities of the CIO. Here is a "for instance," taken straight from the files of the National Labor Relations Board: the CIO organizes most of the workers in a California plant, but the boss doesn't want to do business with them because he knows they mean "business." The AFL hears about it and sends over some organizers to talk to the boss. Then leaders of the disbanded company union join the AFL and before you can say "sweetheart contract," that organization has a closed shop, a check-off and a wage scale that is about the same as the one that existed before. There are many more such cases in the NLRB files and a great many more that never reached the NLRB. In some cases the AFL just waits until the CIO has completed the first stages of "ice breaking," perhaps made a few leaflet distributions at the plant gates. Then the AFL organizer goes in and says to the boss: "Look, Mister Whatsis, you want these CIO communists raising hell in here? Now the AFL is a sensible organization, 100 per cent American. We'll give you a good contract. We'll give you protection." A very efficient method. Several million members is a conservative estimate.

Not that we mean to imply that the AFL hasn't organized millions more the hard way or that there aren't plenty of conscientious, hard-working organizers and officials in that outfit. And there are conscientious men among the top leadership, but the sad tip-off on that group is the reminder that in a sick and war-torn world the AFL executive council has just held another of its annual winter meetings in Miami, Florida. Why Miami? Could it be because of that city's central location? Or perhaps the AFL bigwigs go to Miami every winter because they want to bring the blessings of unionism to the millions of unorganized, exploited men and women in the new industries of the South.

As a matter of fact, who are these machine politicians sunning their stomachs on the beach, these successful business men flipping their bank rolls in the best bars and hotels, unhappy because the horses are no longer running at Tropical and Hialeah? Are these the defenders of the poor, the champions of social justice, the respected leaders of 6,000,000 American workers? (No answer. But offstage is heard the sound of soft and mournful laughter.)

Communists

And the CIO has its weakness as well as its strength, mostly under the one heading: communists. Reports had it that they were opposed to labor unity, largely for the obvious reason that they would be swallowed up. But lately the word is that Moscow is for it if it can be done without too great a loss of power and influence. Reason: anything that contributes to the war effort is No. 1 with Moscow. As for their influence in CIO councils it is much greater than their numerical strength would indicate. Other than the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers Union they control none of the big organizations such as those in autos and aircraft, steel, textiles, clothing, rubber, shipyards, retail stores—all under right wing or middle road leadership. They have a number of small and fairly important ones: East Coast seamen, West Coast longshoremen, furriers, transport workers, mine-mill-and-smelter workers (and there is a chance that they may lose this as they have already lost the Newspaper Guild and once, for a short while, lost the seamen). And they dominate a number of small and unimportant unions: office workers, civil service, furniture workers, etc. It is hard to get accurate figures, but our estimate is that they can't have more than 800,000 to 1,000,000 paid-up members in all their unions, over which maybe 20,000 communists ride herd, all together coming to one-sixth or one-fifth of total CIO membership. To represent this they have three vice-presidents out of nine: Robinson (smelter workers), Curran (seamen, occasionally steps out of line), and Fitzgerald (electrical and radio, more of a front man). On convention committees they get a little less than half representation, on two-man bodies (such as the CIO delegation on the War Labor Board) they get none, on three-man bodies one. For example, Julius Emspak (electrical and radio) sits with Phil Murray and R. J. Thomas (autos) on the CIO peace committee. By the way, the AFL peace committee includes Dan Tobin (teamsters, and strong for unity), Big Bill Hutcheson (carpenters, Republican, labor czar from way back, and the man Lewis busted in the snoot in the famous convention fight that started the CIO in 1935) and Harry Bates (bricklayers).

The comrades have lost some of the key jobs they held at CIO headquarters, notably in the research department, but they still have Lee Pressman in as CIO counsel and Len DeCaux as publicity director. Don't ask us why. It is a mystery to which only Murray knows the answer. But it

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must be admitted that the Muscovites have worked hard for their disproportionate power. They are articulate and well-trained, many of them zealous and self-sacrificing, and they are good at getting their men in as delegates to state and city councils and to conventions, jobs that are unpaid, but important. They are completely unscrupulous and completely Stalin-dominated, and as such they remain a dangerous problem. Not a problem, however, any more serious to the CIO than the racketeer-labor-czar element is to the AFL (see Westbrook Pegler's column for almost any day).

As for the right wing, led by President Murray, Thomas, Hillman, John Green (shipyards), Rieve (textiles), Dalrymple (rubber), Sam Wolchok (retail), it seems to be pretty solidly in favor of labor unity if it can be done on the basis of a "peace with honor" and no sacrifice of principle. The only thing that can prevent that is an arbitrary, arrogant policy on the part of AFL leaders. Once unity has been worked out, the CIO should be able to find enough progressive support within the AFL to outvote the reactionaries in convention. The rest is clear sailing.

Maybe the labor experts are partly right, after all. When you concentrate on them, the obstacles to labor unity look pretty tough. The thing to do is to concentrate either on the blessings of unity ("Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity") or on the evils of disunity. Then the obstacles look very small indeed. What is most hopeful is that peace committees have actually met for the first time in three years, and that they came to an agreement on one aspect of the problem: arbitration of jurisdictional disputes. The thing now is to get them meeting again, and how that can be done we don't know, unless it be by the fervent and unremitting prayer of American workers and their friends.

At the CIO convention President Murray, in discussing unity, said: "I trust that God will give me the sense and the wisdom and the courage to subordinate my position, whatever it may be in life, to the well-being of the community and the millions of workers dependent upon this great labor movement."

That is a noble prayer. We commend it to our readers not only for the intention of Phil Murray, but for all those who have any weight to throw on any side of this potentially crucial question. (And pray for the NAM too, by all means.) It was Saint Bernard, I believe, who said that the three methods of persuasion are word, example and prayer, and that of these the most powerful is prayer. This is still shocking doctrine to us Americans, who have such a superstitious faith in physical action, and only slightly less superstitious a faith in talk, or a written equivalent such as, for example, this article.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

CATHOLIC PRESS MONTH once more is with us. Again comes the annual effort to increase the circulation and increase the influence of our publications, along the lines originated by secular organizations and enterpries; a big burst of "boosting," a powerful—at least a vociferous—"promotion push." Episcopal pronouncements, and what is even more authoritative, renewed quotations from Papal endorsements of the press, and from their never-outmoded (but perhaps not sufficiently well understood) teaching on the permanent principles of literature, journalism, propaganda in its highest sense, form the basis for the month's campaign. And rightly so. NCWC surveys and reports on the past year's progress, or loss, support the authoritative exhortations. And most usefully so. Our public, as well as our editors and writers and business staffs, should know the balance sheet of our collective work. In the wake of the big guns of the campaign come the multitudinous meetings, rallies, resolutions, sermons, radio addresses, committees galore, and the editorials and the local circulation campaigns of hundreds of periodicals—in short, most of the approved and in general quite unobjectionable methods of what is held to be the most efficient means for "promoting" and "boosting" mass-manufactured modern products.

Well, so long as such promotion is based upon the existence of really worth-while, legitimately desirable values in the article or product or service or ideas or movements which are thus "promoted," it would seem to be justified, in theory anyhow. But I for one candidly must confess that such methods don't appear to have worked well in the case of our Catholic press. What do my readers think? Briefly, my own opinion is that (omitting consideration of our creative literature, our output of books in the higher classes of work, and sticking merely to our journalism) we are doing well, and the prospects constantly grow better, in the field of serious reviews, of "quality" journalism. Also in the field of home magazines, especially those that carry into the homes the promotion of our missions; also, from certain of our colleges come periodicals of rapidly increasing merit, containing steadily increasing signs both of the influence of inspiring Catholic humanistic ideals, and of the response on the part of those without whom the outlook for Catholic participation in American and world literature, and journalism, would be bleak indeed—our boys and girls, young women and young men. And all this is most welcome. If the fermentation of spirit and mind, now so evident, is really aided by the annual "promotion" drive, as well may be the case, more power to it, say I. After all, no great quantity of leaven is needed to enliven and make nourishing great masses of dough.

But we certainly seem to produce and "promote" too much dough that not only lacks the leaven of desirable journalistic qualities, but is less than half well-baked, con-

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sidered by any journalistic standards of merit. In my humble opinion, this applies mostly to the majority of our so-called Catholic weekly "newspapers." A large number read as if their publication place was Laodicea, not the USA. Neither good nor bad, nor hot nor cold; a mass, or a mess, of mediocrity. As for the few which because of the chip-on-the-shoulder, carping, cantankerous and bigoted spirit in which they are written and edited—well, that's another story. Unfortunately, it is one that has unfolded a tale of mischief the consequences of which the entire Catholic body must face and deal with before many more February promotion drives come and go.

It seems regrettable that January, rather than February, is not chosen for such drives. After all, January brings the annual Feast of Saint Francis de Sales. In our efforts to rally and direct Catholic public opinion to the plain Catholic public duty of supporting its press—of course, its duty is to support a worthy press and not a stupid or dull or mischievous press—not only the invocation of the aid of such a practical pressman Saint as the Bishop of Geneva, but also the employment of his humanistic, truly Christian, integrally Catholic spirit, are essential factors of success. To say nothing—though much ought to be said—about the efforts we should make to demonstrate to the non-Catholic public the true spirit, the universal public and personal benefits of our religion as it is mirrored, and radiated, in and from our press.

Well, Saint Francis de Sales, that highly practical Catholic, won't permit himself to be snubbed, even accidentally; nor is he a huffy soul; he won't mind what the month or the year may me; he will work for us—and it's a tough task he must face.

Communications

TOTALITARIAN LIBERALS

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: THE COMMONWEAL would be surprised, I take it, if Mr. Norman Thomas's article ("Totalitarian Liberals," January 22) went unanswered. May I lead off with the following remarks?

It is possible that Mr. Thomas has proved too much. We have survived, with more or less good humor, one period in which every opponent was a "communist" and another in which the opposition was always "fascist." Does Mr. Thomas's proclamation now officially inaugurate still another period in which the other side must always be, willy-nilly, "totalitarian liberal"? Heaven forbid! But there is more than a suspicion of this in Mr. Thomas's all-inclusive and rather reckless use of the term —a term, by the way, which he has yet to define satisfactorily.

It is interesting that, deep-down, Mr. Thomas's disagreement with some of his victims is based not so much on principle as on a different view of the facts. He grudgingly admits, apparently on the basis of facts, the necessity of military conscription; he is inclined, on the other hand, to suggest that price-freezing in wartime is totalitarian. But surely the advisability of price-freezing or wage stabilization or rationing at this time can hardly

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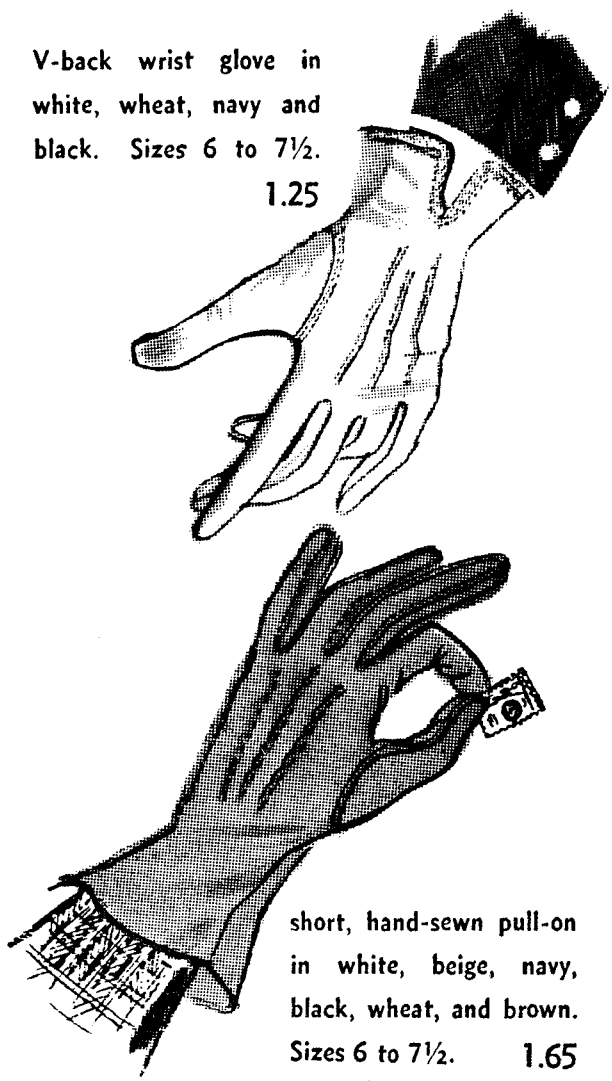

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reach an oasis. The corporal, plenty frightened, sneaks be decided, *a priori,* on a principle. He would be in favor of condemning anti-Semitic publications, and rightly so, but seems strangely to shy away from a similar condemnation of the despicable lies and calumnies and sabotage of the Chicago *Tribune*. I don't know whether or not the *Tribune* should be suppressed; very probably it should not. But the point I am making is this, that Mr. Thomas is apparently just as eclectic in his dislikes as are the "totalitarian liberals" and as, for that matter, are most of us poor humans. Mr. Thomas is writing out of the fullness of his own background and his own prejudices, not in the cold, clear light of an intellectual vacuum. Your readers can gather more than an inkling of that background from Mr. Thomas's recent angry letter to the editor of *Time* (January 25, 1943). It would be interesting to speculate on the extent to which the attitude expressed in that letter on the whole broad question of the war, its origins, its execution and its ends, accounts for some of the charges made in his COMMONWEAL article.

Incidentally, it will be of interest to your readers to recall that one of the men singled out by Mr. Thomas for honorable mention as a well-meaning "totalitarian liberal," Mr. E. H. Carr, was praised very highly by THE COMMONWEAL in the issue of December 4. Mr. John Chamberlain, of the New York *Times,* and, to lesser extent perhaps, THE COMMONWEAL itself have warned of an excessive emphasis on statism in Mr. Carr's book. But this is quite different from labeling him so casually and arbitrarily with the latest derogatory tag. Mr. Carr, poor fellow, is now a "totalitarian liberal," whether he knows it or not! So are Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Biddle and many lesser lights. They will be surprised to hear it—but they can take courage from the fact that Mr. Thomas holds out reasonable hopes for some of them.

It is only fair to conclude by remarking that Mr. Thomas has made some good points and made them well. He has warned us against abusing the argument from wartime emergency. But, then, THE COMMONWEAL has been doing that consistently for many months. It would seem possible to perform that task quite well without resorting to the use of shibboleths.

REV. GEORGE G. HIGGINS.

INTERRACIAL COURSES . . .

Bronx, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Undoubtedly the majority of your readers are aware that the only resolution passed by the recent convention of the American Catholic Sociological Society was to urge all Catholic educators to accept the study of interracial questions as an "imperative responsibility" and "the most essential contribution that can be made in the education of Catholic leaders of tomorrow."

However, we reasonably assume that few of your readers know that Fordham has such a course on its curriculum, and is the first graduate school of social service to do so. The course is conducted by Father John LaFarge, S.J., Executive Editor of *America,* and Mr. George K. Hunton, Editor, *Interracial Review*. They are assisted by a distinguished staff.

This course completely analyzes the interracial phenomenon and, in particular, the Negro. Causes rooted in prejudice, racial imperialism, those that spring from the social, political and economic life, are all scrutinized. Their effects, such as restrictions, segregations, discriminations, crime, delinquency, are all diligently studied in the class-room. Inadequate housing within strict territorial limitations are seen as the causes of cruel monopolies and contributing factors to family limitation and many other current social evils. Much time is also given to the study of the historical background of cheap labor, the economic system that had immigrant labor to compete with Negro labor.

This is but a brief description of Fordham's intelligent and courageous response to the many appeals of the Pope for a more intense study of our social evils. This initiative predicates a flexible and elastic educational policy that is so essential to meeting the issues of our present social revolution. It is also evidence of the university's intention to indoctrinate their students with a genuine social responsibility.

It is my honest conviction that every Catholic college in the country should have a course of this type. I believe that it can be argued from the standpoint of fact, of practicality, of enthusiasm. It brings into complete focus man in his wholeness, his completeness, his entirety. The destruction of our modern caricature of God's "image and likeness" depends solely on a Christocratic youth.

REV. JOHN JOS. ROACH.

The Stage & Screen

The Patriots

TO TELL of great men, great issues and stirring times, to capture the exalted mood of men consciously struggling to form not only a present but a future, to make meaningful the deliberate sacrifice of private fortune, not to fame alone but to ideals formed of themselves as public benefactors—such has been the bold undertaking of Sidney Kingsley in telling the story of Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Madison, and Monroe. He has richly succeeded in his aims, at all times showing a perfect mastery of his materials. As the playwright has been equal to his noble theme, so too the actors—Raymond Edward Johnson as Jefferson, House Jameson as Hamilton, Cecil Humphreys as Washington, Ross Matthew as Madison and Judson Laire as Monroe—have brought strength, dignity and even magnificence to the play to make of it a glorious night for lovers of the theater.

I know little of radio. I do not think I ever heard Mr. Johnson on that medium, where he has starred, according to the playbill, for the past ten years. Radio experience may possibly account for his apparent inability to vary his voice when he climbs to a high pitch. At his topmost range he is declamatory. Speaking for myself, however, I must say that this strength or weakness, whichever it may be, gave me the highest pleasure. To declaim

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great thoughts and lofty aspirations is to make prose into blank verse. For this play the transformation was nothing less than admirable. Either Mr. Johnson deliberately uses this technique and shows himself a great actor, or his casting was a work of matchless perfection.

Go to "The Patriots" to be reminded of the grandeur of spirit which informed this land as our country started forward toward its awe-inspiring destiny. If we have attained greatness, it is because greatness was our heritage.

The incidents making the story of the play are not important because they simply symbolize a struggle—itself the play—which transcends particular happenings. It is struggle between aristocrats or Hamiltonians and democrats or Jeffersonians, with Washington living high above faction and mediating faction's quarrels. Disregard questions of historicity in this play. It is exact enough to be dramatically true. It tells the truth, the essential and poetic truth, of our past. With us division of opposed interests though deep and permanent has always been less marked than our unity in obedience to common constitutional principles. This profound tale is retold by "The Patriots" with sureness and conviction. The audience thought it had everything, and so did I. *(At the National.)*

JAMES N. VAUGHAN.

Two By Land; One By Air

WHEN WARNER BROTHERS decided to produce *"Air Force,"* they must have decided to make a flying film that was bigger and better than all others. They have done just that. And if you like a movie that gives you the feeling of history in the making, a movie spattered with names that sound like a course in current history, "Air Force" is for you. It opens with a quotation from Lincoln's Gettysburg address. It visits or mentions Honolulu, Guam, Wake Island, Manila, Kurusu, MacArthur. It includes a broadcast of President Roosevelt's declaration-of-war speech to Congress. It even shows us a view from the air of Pearl Harbor in flames. "Air Force" has a story, too, about the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress "Mary Ann" and its heroic crew. We learn enough about the members of this crew so that they become persons and not just part of the machinery of the plane: the pilot who loves the plane and treats it with care and respect (John Ridgely); the bombardier whose sister was wounded at Hickam Field (Arthur Kennedy); the co-pilot who is in love with this sister (Gig Young); the crew chief who fought in the last war and who has a son killed in this one before he has a chance to fight (Harry Carey); the assistant crew chief whose sense of humor and Brooklyn accent are an asset to his co-workers and the whole movie (George Tobias); the aerial gunner whose bitterness because he failed to become a pilot turns to white hot patriotism after Pearl Harbor (John Garfield); the passenger (James Brown), a pursuit pilot who is being taken to Manila to fly a plane there. Dudley Nichols, who wrote this screenplay, steered clear of a complicated story, stuck close to straightforward, clear-cut characters. Some drama is worked out amongst them, but the main theme is the "Mary Ann"—its flight on December 6 and 7 to Hawaii, its continued flights to Wake, then the Philippines where it engages in battle, then its very active rôle in the battle in the Coral Sea. Director Howard Hawks effectively instils excitement and emotion into this film whose heroine is a flying fortress. My bone of contention with "Air Force" is that its makers did not know where to stop. Finally the shots and sequences become redundant. The fighting episodes, although magnificent, have a similarity that weakens their force. And the big scene of the Coral Sea battle is so long and repetitive that it becomes monotonous. We leave the film surfeited with planes and battle. If "Air Force" were 30 minutes shorter it would be not only "bigger" but "best." As it is, it's bigger and very good.

"The Immortal Sergeant" is an unusual war film. You will either like it immensely or you will think it's a lot of nonsense and much ado about nothing. It tells a simple, engaging story about a small group of English soldiers on a scouting patrol in Libya. The 14 men under a sergeant, who they think is tops (a private refers to him as "the whole blooming British army rolled into one"), have a small battle of their own with three Italian planes. One plane is downed; eight of the English are killed. The survivors continue their mission, get lost, attack an Italian armored car. All of the Italians and one of the English are killed. The sergeant, severely wounded, shoots himself so as not to burden the four remaining men. The corporal now in command leads the other three through the hot desert. The hungry, thirsty, hot, exhausted men push their way across the sands. Through a series of flashbacks to London, we learn that the corporal is a timid, self-effacing novelist who hasn't the guts to ask the girl he loves to marry him and who was taunted (by his competitor for the girl's hand) for joining the army as a private—"the only comfortable way to take orders and do your job." But inspired by the spirit of the sergeant (whom we hear but do not see, thank goodness), the corporal pushes the other three men on and on. They reach an oasis. The corporal, plenty frightened, sneaks

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up on the 40 nazis encamped there, then returns later with the other three men. In the confusion of a sandstorm, the four Englishmen kill all the nazis. This is an exceptionally simple plot, but John Stahl has directed so well and with such moving unaffected touches that the film is convincing. Lamar Trotti gave the film a good production; he also wrote the script, which is based on the novel by John Brophy. The acting throughout is of a high standard. Henry Fonda, as the corporal, gives one of the finest performances of his career. Also outstanding are Thomas Mitchell, Allyn Joslyn, Melville Cooper, Morton Lowry. Maureen O'Hara and Reginald Gardiner figure in the flashbacks. I was won by the film's slow, exciting suspense and touching simplicity. You may find it a bore for the same reasons. Just how noble was the sergeant's suicide is another question. The film is not labored with false heroics. Our corporal is scared and admits it. His experience makes a complete man out of him.

The really novel thing about *"When Johnny Comes Marching Home"* is that its plot isn't the usual musical-comedy flimsy vacuum. Johnny (Allan Jones) returns from battle a hero. On furlough in New York he discovers what Sherman meant, because all his time is taken up with appearing before an adoring public on the arm of a publicity-mad débutante. So Johnny assumes his former stage name, retires to his old rooming house. Here, a new confusion arises when his theatrical pals, not knowing about the hero Johnny, think he's a deserter. Before the finale, in which of course things straighten out, we get some good satire on hero-worshipping Americans, as well as a lot of musical numbers. Phil Spitalny is on hand with his all-girl orchestra who play plenty hot. Three youngsters (Donald O'Connor, Gloria Jean, Peggy Ryan) help the plot along and do a couple of good song-and-dance acts. While women in the audience oh and ah over Allan Jones's voice and marcel, men can interest themselves in Jane Frazee who plays the romantic lead and sings with Spitalny's girls. Their best number is a choral entitled "This Is Worth Fighting For." Young Donald O'Connor has a flair for comedy that is delightful. I shouldn't be surprised if he rates stardom one of these days.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Art at War

By JAMES W. LANE

AMERICA, the home of vast art exhibitions, may through them keep well informed on the state of the Union. The graphic arts—painting and prints—reveal what we are thinking of, or not thinking of. Even glyptic art, though it cannot so well express contemporary social life, because to sculpture esthetic ideals based on material, form and line chiefly matter, occasionally succeeds in this function.

One of the vaster art exhibitions, "Artists for Victory" at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, should be assessed against the background of the last immense show of contemporary American art hereabouts, that at the New York World's Fair in 1940. In two and a half years certain great changes have taken place. In the first place we cannot say that the war has not tinged our thinking. At the Metropolitan one sees as many canvases reflecting combat—from Gideon J. Pillow Lewis's well-composed watercolor, "Induction Center," where the undressed men await their turn for physical examination, to Eugene Higgins's sturdy "Abandoned," where the victims of a torpedoing huddle in a life-boat while their ship settles amid a greenish-brown murk into the sea—as any other contemporary subject. We have become aware also of the Negro problem. Three years ago it was barely beginning to make its way on to canvas. All except the more radical artists were indifferent or ignorant. In 1936 there had been a show of lynching in art, but in 1941 two exciting, well-attended shows in New York galleries of paintings, sculpture and prints by Negroes were straws in the wind. Now the Metropolitan Museum exhibition produces incisive work on this most important question. John Carroll, John De Martelly, Isaac Soyer and Jacob Lawrence, the last himself a Negro and one of whose two fine watercolors, "Pool Parlor," won sixth prize out of more than a hundred papers, have all lifted up their voices. There are also two splendid portraits of Negroes.

As a contrast to these changes, gone are the studies—since studies in grouping were alone what they interested the artist for—of WPA work gangs which were so preponderant two years ago. The army has taken over all this mechanization of work, and after the war we shall see whether systems of work can be humanized.

In an exhibition like this which, with its 1,400 accepted pieces taking up all the picture galleries except one in the Metropolitan, constitutes at least a two hour march to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest, one can find a little bit of everything that animates us. Even religion, though not much of it. Maurice Sterne must go to Mexico to show color and devotion in his "Mexican Church Interior," a spiritual canvas, but it is a strain to find precisely what are the overtones Abraham Rattner means to convey in his "Descent from the Cross." The Picassoist eyes and heads of the guards look on shrewdly, and one feels that the painter was on the verge of saying something important, but it got away in a tangle of lines and dark color.

There are few fixed principles or few fixed subjects in American art today. Time was when the Museum's paintings in some of the galleries were not changed for what seemed like a generation. One gained the impression that painting existed to make romantic, aristocratic, vague and lush landscapes, and the people in paintings existed just to be "posey." These principles did indeed last a long while—from 1900 to 1930, you can say, (though long before 1930 artists were already painting differently) —and so the Museum should not be too severely judged for not reacting against a time-lag, of which perhaps only the forward-looking painters and critics were conscious. But now, more than ever before, America reflects many other isms. Many painters no longer paint like Chase, Bellows, the Boston School or Cézanne. They could take, if physically possible, a hundred models, for there are a hundred different influences in the Artists for Victory ex-

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hibition. The second-prize winner, John Rogers Cox of Indiana, has fashioned the grey thunderheads in his "Grey and Gold" in the manner of Grant Wood, as though the knobby serrations of the cloud ridges were a grove of trees, and those the kind made of sponge rubber. Out of Dali and surrealism comes the enameled clarity surrounded by brown gloom of John Atherton's "The Black Horse—Imaginative Landscape," but the poison fangs of surrealism have been removed and the subject is thus less crazy and unhealthy.

Better than the fact that you could find more influences in American painting than before (one wonders what the 14,000 canvases on the rejected list were all about) is the fact that there are more distinct personalities, that is, dissimilarities between subjects and techniques are greater than similarities. If there were only more outstanding pictures! One of the best in the whole show is Jack Levine's "String Quartette," a large painting perfectly balanced, and lit up with Levine's favorite red-plush, here turning more to red-orange, background glow. The heads, comforted by the music, are observed with intense psychological insight. This is a beautiful picture, well deserving second prize. Curiously enough one of the other grand portraits in the show is also of a musician, Wayman Adams's "Gregor Piatigorsky," a canvas of Van Dyckian proportions, full of vigor and the spirit of music.

"That Which I Should Have Done, I Did Not Do" is a pungent title, carrying all sorts of interesting moral aroma. It would be flippant to say the title rather than the painting won first prize. At any rate, it's a good title. One who knows Ivan Le Lorraine Albright, the winner, knows that this Illinois artist, once an anatomical draughtsman in a hospital, will give you lots of mouse-grey, welted human flesh in portraits where skin is pouchy or pendulous, and otherwise evidences the passing of time (his theme-song). Here he exhibits merely a pair of iron doors, tall as Ghiberti's, with a flower spray attached to the knocker. A hand disappearing at the left has evidently just left them, while already on the pavement a less fresh rose has fallen from the flowers. In a remarkable book, "Merry In God," concerning Father William Doyle, one of Father Doyle's notes is quoted: "Mark down at least once a day everything you do, and every time you do it. It will not make you proud to see all you do, but it will humble you by showing you all you don't do." Perhaps this will help toward an understanding of the Albright picture, which, though explicit as to its title, doesn't show all you don't do and hence, probably purposely, merely suggests.

Despite the fact that there are some fine things in Artists for Victory—pictures by Harry Gottlieb, Antonio and Giovanni Martino, Stephen Etnier, Lue Osborne, John Folinsbee, Louis Bouché, Esther Williams, Karl Anderson and Andrew Wyeth—the spiritual side of life does somehow get omitted. Reginald Marsh's oil, "Pursuit," representing an indistinctly seen youth on a carrousel horse making passes at a lax-looking girl, who occupies the center of the stage, on another carrousel horse, is perhaps a case in point. This is one of the best paintings technically in the whole exhibition; its composition and its whirling movement are altogether Marshian. But what good purpose does it serve to harp, as Reggie has often done, on sex? His watercolor, "Prometheus in Rockefeller Center," with the skating crowd that can do all the tricks, a wonderful piece of work even though betraying Marsh's rather extreme preoccupation with form, is in an adjoining room—is it to let us see that he doesn't have to resort to the lubricious every time? Still other painters, like Fletcher Martin, Douglas Gorsline, and Paul Cadmus, who has no oils or watercolors here, have a tendency to glorify wantonness.

For these reasons our painting of the moment is at its best in landscape and still-life, when fellows like Varnum Poor and Anatol Shulkin do it, because our painting is not sensitive to the profounder questions affecting the understanding. Surrealism and other products of mooniness do not even scratch the surface. Perhaps our painting will never be as sensitive to these questions as it should. Meanwhile sculpture, from which one hardly expected such responsiveness, seems to maintain its hold over basic truths and to express them better than the graphic arts. From the great bison-head of Paderewski by Ziolkowski and the honest spirituality of De Creeft's prize-winning "Maternity" to the sensitiveness of Waylande Gregory's "Ichabod Crane," Doris Caesar's "Mother and Child" and Charles Umlauf's "Christ and the Children," the sculpture shows the finer grain.

Editors' Choice

French Refugee Life in the United States, 1790-1800. *Frances Sergeant Childs. Hopkins.* $3.00.

A Latin American Speaks. *Luis Quintanilla. Macmillan.* $2.50.

Let the People Know. *Norman Angell. Viking.* $2.50.

Refugees

OF COURSE you are just a dumb foreigner, a frog, and when you look out of the hospital window the snow has turned to rain and the snow is all wet and dirty piled up on the balconies where they put the patients out to get the sun when and if the season changes and the view does not look like the view over the Paris roof tops and no one blames you for being homesick. Your only mistake is that you think you are homesick for a place, whereas you are homesick for your memories and for everyone else's memories and it is just because you are sick that you have time, undistracted, to carry the burden of all our memories, the real ones and the ones in books—which are the real ones?—and homesickness is not the right word, for these memories are within you: they only seem to be outside, distant and lost.

You should not worry about Peru. Long ago, in Lima, you ordered your coachman to race through the streets and the Bishop complained because the Viceroy gave you his coach and it was a political crisis and a public scandal but then you gave up your coach to the Bishop so that the Blessed Sacrament might be carried in state to the poor and to the dying. Thus everything ended pleasantly, and Mérimée must have been feeling better when he wrote

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that story about La Péricholle than when he wrote about the gypsy in Spain who was not as nice as Bizet made her, nor did she sing so much. And if you complain that you cannot go to Saint Petersburg—see how the name carries you back in time—to Kiev, to Moscow, do not worry about Smolensk nor seek an invitation to "Bald Hills." Russia is known to you. All the countries are known to you. That's what books are for. There is a book for every country. There is a voice in every country which has made it possible for men everywhere never to feel separated from men in countries they cannot reach. These books break down all the walls of distance, they entirely disregard frontiers; languages become merely regional forms of speech. So that when all the barriers are broken and all the lives of people who have suffered in all the distant countries are part of your own suffering, your own memories, and your own life, then you will still feel alone—with all these crowded fraternal memories in your heart—for man is always alone. It is not the self-centered who are lonely; it is those who bear the burden of all the loneliness in all the world, of all the misery of all the exiles throughout the world and throughout time who are most alone. They are alone because, more fully than the self-centered, they share man's condition which is that of exile. It cannot be helped. It is but for a season.

So do not worry about Paris where a cold wind blows through the darkened streets and do not worry about Ars, for the priest of Ars is no longer bound by the worries of that little parish; he is constrained now by the thoughts of all French exiles everywhere. Probably because he would have made so poor an exile, he is bound now to take charge of his compatriots exiled throughout the cities of the world and who remember his village and the silent plain with the ponds in the evening and the wild duck settling. And, since there is no time, since the reversibility of merit knows nothing about time, it was he also who worried over your predecessors who came here, the Huguenots, after the Revocation, and then over the refugees of the stormy revolutionary years.

Some four years ago, Frances Childs wrote a book about those who came from France and from Santo Domingo between 1790 and 1800 and how they had their newspapers, their quarrels, and how some of them were rich and more of them were poor and how some of them were famous like Talleyrand and the three d'Orleans brothers "unassuming and well bred" of whom one was to return to France as King Louis Philippe, and how others knew a trade or learnt a trade and went to work here and stayed here. There was the Marquise de la Tour du Pin who bought and worked a farm near Albany, Moreau de St. Méry who became a publisher in Philadelphia, La Farge who escaped from Santo Domingo "after weeks of living on oranges in the island forest." There were scientists and artists and very few of these people were of a like mind as to politics in France but all of them were a great nuisance to citoyen Genet, the Minister of the Republic, just as in our time, and until he was removed from the scene, Henry-Haye—does anyone remember him?—found them a trial. At times also they must have seemed a nuisance to Washington and to Jefferson but then as now their furious debate was an important debate and then as now America was enriched by their presence. As Miss Childs remarks, there were those who planned to stay in America yet who returned to France and those who longed to return who stayed. It is always that way.

This is a book for Americans to read and for exiles to read. Written before the war broke out there can be no question of attributing any deliberate malice to the witty descriptions Miss Childs makes of refugee characters and characteristics. She could not foresee, she would not have wished to foresee the parallel situations which were so soon to exist. For this reason there is at times an irony and a compassion which adds great savor to her thoroughly entertaining work.

A (Latin) American

"A LATIN AMERICAN SPEAKS" is a book to put you in mind of the old hypothetical question which so delights elementary students of sociology, psychology *et al.* Suppose you had two Italian twins. Suppose you gave one of them at birth to a Jewish family and the other at birth to an Irish family. When they grew up, would each twin be, respectively, "Jewish" and "Irish"? Or would they both be Italian? Or would they be Italian with a Jewish or Irish overlay?

Mr. Quintanilla, we presume, was born to Mexican parents. At least his father was a Mexican. But he was born in Paris, he was educated in France, and at Johns Hopkins. We are told that he has taught and been a diplomat all over the world. However this may be, he is clearly a North American, and environment seems to have won a solid victory over heredity. In fact, it is no question of a Mexican with a North American or French overlay, but North American with a Latin name, and a considerably greater knowledge of Latin countries because he has been there, has relatives there, speaks the language. Indeed this book could have been written just as well by any one of several score American professors or publicists. The whole point of view is North American with a specific "university" and "liberal" slant, however great may be the sympathy expressed for the author's blood brothers. A careful search of his text, bibliography and index, for instance, shows a tremendous preoccupation with economics and politics and an almost complete lack of concern with religion or the arts or the specifically humanist achievements of our Southern neighbors. What little there is about religion is certainly no reflection of a Catholic tradition, though it is not likely to be objectionable to Catholic readers. The extraordinary thing is how little part any of the non-economic and non-political factors play in the author's description of the lands he wishes to make more familiar to North American readers.

So much having been said, it must be added that "A Latin American Speaks" performs a useful service. It is written in clear and forceful language, and it makes clear without shadow of a doubt the tremendous and almost sickening disparity between the standards of living of South and Central America and that of North America, exclusive of Mexico. When one reads Mr. Quintanilla's summary account of labor conditions and of labor's purchasing power in some of the Latin Republics, one is very nearly nauseated. For that much we owe him profound thanks. His political analyses seem rather elementary and oversimplified. It is hard to tell exactly what his line is, except that he looks favorably upon socialism and democracy both, and has a biting scorn and hatred for fascism in every form. So by and large what his book is useful for is the bright light it casts on the problem of lifting the living standards of the people dwelling within the boundaries of the Good-Neighbor-Lands. As any sort of account either of their culture or their other aspirations, it is very nearly useless.

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The Empire Isn't So Bad!

TO AMERICANS who have had doubts about this war one basic question might well be: is the difference between the British Empire, say, and the projected Hitler or Japanese New Order one of kind or merely of degree? India immediately comes to mind in this connection. The question is so vast and so many factors are involved that it is comparatively simple to make a good case for either answer to the question. What is not so easy to find is an over-all conclusion based on adequate weighing of the various significant factors.

Norman Angell, for all his prominence and long concern with such matters—and his goodwill in most directions—is not a man quite up to such a task. He has one convincing answer for the American doubter, namely, that if the nazis were to succeed and the Gestapo policed large sections of the globe, many countries and peoples would be ruthlessly enslaved. Even making every allowance for the additional cruelties due to war, nazi control is clear to see in all its contempt for human values. But this suggestion appears in Chapter II, and instead of developing it and clinching the argument, Sir Norman proceeds along weaker tangents for pages and pages more.

In fact, the way to satisfy all doubts about this war is to read "Let the People Know" uncritically, for the picture of British acumen and social-mindedness it presents is so imposing. England is portrayed as a relatively poor island of some mere 45,000,000 souls without sufficient power or influence to do anything to thwart our big United States in any quarter. The record in India is not spotless, but things are really progressing mighty nicely there. And if the Malays refused to rally round "because they had nothing to fight for," yet there were peoples in other parts of the world who were much more guilty because they insisted on fighting for their independence all by their lonesome. To such arguments Norman Angell adds a good many facts and justifications on the Empire that are highly plausible; it is simply that he rushes gaily by a horde of difficulties or fails to realize the damaging implications of some of his contentions. His questioner, John Citizen, is artistically of the creakiest sort.

Are Americans to be so severely blamed for their widespread isolationism? We have Mr. Sumner Welles to take us most severely to task on such a score. But is it not possible—as these gentlemen quite ignore—that the exposure of the Allied propaganda here in the last war has much to do with the latest manifestations of that traditional American feeling? Surely here is a potent reason for anti-foreign sentiment, and when this is added to the natural tendency of every man to be interested only in his own, the result is not surprising. Or are Americans naturally perverse? Here again we have a combination of good and bad argument on the author's part. For he maintains successfully that the world has shrunk to the point where every nation must be prepared to defend at least its neighbors in its own self-defense.

Most difficult of all is the problem of developing on the individual's part a world-mindedness consonant with present day conditions. Especially when governments themselves and the presumably educated men who direct them have thus far so utterly failed to develop it. Sir Norman has a facile explanation for this inadequacy. He says that we have knowledge today as we never had before, but that we have not known how to apply this knowledge to public policy. He would, in fact, focus upon education to develop this aptitude, or this skill, as the hope

"The book is simple, unpretentious and charming. . . . The reader is not battered with statistics, but warmed with the human side of great missionaries who faced the blinding dismal trails with a workingman's knowledge that he was on the job!

"It is a pleasure to recommend these tales high-lighting the great work of Bishop Crimont, Fathers Lucchesi, Monroe, Jette, and their Jesuit confreres. These very readable pages deserve a place in every Catholic library.

"DOGSLED APOSTLES is one of the most sensible books of its kind ever written. It covers hurriedly but completely the history of the Church in Alaska, which Pius XI called the hardest of the missions. There is a brief summary of the work accomplished by the Russian Church before the United States took over, a deserved nod to the Oblates who opened up the fields for the Western missionaries, and the glorious records of the men who have carried on up until this time.

"MISS ALMA SAVAGE, THE AUTHOR (and travelling saleslady for Sheed & Ward) tells her story the way men want it told—without sentiment or pity and prosy spiritualized paragraphs on their discomforts and sufferings. As a matter of fact the book is simple, unpretentious and charming—good talk about rough life by one who does not believe that you have to have an embroidered handkerchief to blow your nose. It strikes no attitudes, but hews to the facts and turns out just what the chronicle is worth, a most interesting and inspiring story.

"THE WHOLE IS REMARKABLY WELL-WRITTEN even though the author doesn't seem to be aware of it. She thrills to the rugged beauty of the land, the mountains and streams, barren islands, and the drama of the Indians and Eskimos digging a living through the barrier of snow and ice with its embalming cold. She reports the clash of cultures, the white man's invasion of the rude uncivilized world of the fisherman, and hunter; the social upheaval that followed the moil for gold and furs, disease, drink, exploitation and starvation; the medical help and hospitalization but principally the work of the men and women who have carried the heavy cross to the people.

"THE AUTHOR DELIGHTS IN their storied biographies for their interest and character portrayal. She braves the indicative mood that lets the events talk for themselves. The deeds of the dogsled apostles are their only tribute and their memories were locked in old men's ears in the igloo homes along the circle."

H. O'H. Walker, S.J., in THE QUEEN'S WORK.

DOGSLED APOSTLES, by Alma Savage, with photographic illustrations, a Talbot Club Selection. Listed by the A. L. A. Booklist. $2.75.

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of a governed and peaceful post-war world. He seems to take little or no account of the element of will in the matter and consequently ignores completely the function of religion or the possibilities of a change of heart. Might it not be much more convincing to hold that it is lack of will rather than lack of skill, or even of understanding, that has prevented humankind in the twentieth century from utilizing its store of vastly expanded knowledge for the common good? Possibly that is the history we should "let the people know."

More Books of the Week

Great Modern Catholic Short Stories. Compiled by Sister Mariella Gable. Sheed. $3.00.

IT IS one of the blessings and woes of modern publishing practice that most books' titles are given them by their publishers and not by their authors. Sister Mariella's collection of short stories is called "Great Modern Catholic." The way the Sheed and Ward typographer arranged the jacket of her book produces an effect something like this: "great modern CATHOLIC short stories." Now obviously this is a bad title. It seems to be specific, and yet upon reflection it can mean any number of things. It may mean that the stories are written by Catholics, or it may mean that they are about Catholics, or that somehow they impart flavor or instruction relating to positive doctrine or philosophy. The only reason to raise any fuss about the matter is that some people *will* insist upon being contentious!

The penalty for this book's title lies in the preceding paragraph, which has all but crowded out any mention of the book's contents of excellent stories and of an exceedingly acute and brilliant preface by Sister Mariella, which in a very few pages presents the current status of American fictional handling of priests and nuns and monks. In French and Italian and German literature, and for the Orthodox in Russian literature, everything that is Catholic is handled naturally, unselfconsciously. Priests and nuns are present in literature as they are in life; they have the importance and the truth in literature that they have in living. In the dedicated lives they lead there are combats and problems which parallel on a special plane the struggle and the problems of the simple Christian. The greatest European literature has always dealt with this spiritual combat, and in the word literature I include the writings of the saints themselves. But in American Catholic writing there has been until very recently a tone of gentle (and genteel) propaganda which has filled unreadable books with unrecognizable pious puppets. And in American non-Catholic fiction—since the non-Catholics have had no valid Catholic literature to inform them of the living reality of priests and nuns and monks—we have found the same puppets, only with the reverse English of anti-Catholic feeling.

Sister Mariella presents writing by Catholics and by non-Catholics from which the puppets have disappeared. Here are contemporary writers who are using contemporary techniques, but in no case difficult or experimental techniques, who are not afraid to write directly and as the characters compel them to write, about priests and nuns. I am sorry I used the word *afraid*. It is not the right word. It is rather that people are becoming aware of the presence in American life of the priest and the nun, a natural presence, not a foreign presence, and so they are becoming at long last able to speak of these people, these men and these women, naturally. They are no longer faced with something odd, that they do not know about, that it would be better not to touch, that can be touched only with great precautions, Catholic precautions or non-Catholic precautions. The stories in this book are varied in taste as they are in scene and in treatment. Many of them are very good stories. I am not sure I know what a "great" story is (and there is that Title back again). But the fact that Sister Mariella has been able to collect and present them is evidence that a change has come in American letters. And that change, which is very much a change for the better, is due, profoundly, to the lives of the priests and the nuns who have worked and lived in our national life.

C. G. PAULDING.

This Modern Music—A Guide for the Bewildered Listener. John Tasker Howard. Crowell. $2.50.

LAST YEAR at a composers' forum a modest-looking business man played one of his compositions at the piano. It was an old fashioned sounding piece. It went along smoothly except for moment when Mr. Henry Cowell (it was he) placed his arm along the keyboard and played a "tone cluster." Occasionally he plucked the strings inside the piano or played a chord with his elbow, but otherwise the piece was straight. The moral of this is that the shudders experienced in the past—the ear-rending which took place when the "Sacre du printemps" or Varèse's "Hyperprism" were played, are no more. Our ears are certainly accustomed to impressionism. Atonality and polytonality may cause moments of strain, but even they are welcome at a time when modern music seems to have become solidly respectable. The *cursus honorum* for the composer seems to be set. He starts off with impressionism. . . . There are shades of Debussy's "La Mer" in his music—or we can hear the satyr's cloven hoof, the shepherd's pipe and the rain dripping from the roof. Then the composer throws it all away—all the keys and all the resolutions and the images. He strikes out in atonality for no key at all (this is very difficult to achieve *and* maintain), or he uses several keys at once in polytonality. Later he may try ¼ and ½ tones. Then comes the end of the story. He turns to neo-classicism, which is difficult to define but means roughly that he uses a classical structure and elaborates it with his own idiom and an occasional discord to show us where we are.

For this reason John Tasker Howard's book reads as if it were written about ten years ago. It is a "how to" book, "a guide for the bewildered listener." It is well written, it pigeonholes, it analyzes and defines. Mr. Howard has a smooth, amusing style and chooses illustrations with a deft hand. You read it quickly and with enjoyment, but it is difficult to see *who* it was written *for*. The conscientious concertgoer or listener ought to know a great many of the facts that Mr. Howard gives, and he ought to be able to define atonality and polytonality for himself. It might be directed at the very old, but even they must be stubbornly diatonic indeed if they are still mad at the "Sacre du printemps" and "Pacific 231."

MARGARET BYARD.

Wide Is the Gate. Upton Sinclair. Viking. $3.00.

THE UNREAL adventures of the shadowy Lanny Budd are continued through the Europe of 1934 to 1938. Quite lacking in artistry but popular with those who like fictionalized history.

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The Inner Forum

Maria Laach's 50th

ALTHOUGH the Abbey of Solesmes in France has a longer history in the promotion of the modern liturgical revival, everyone agrees that the ideological powerhouse of that movement for the past 30 years has been the Benedictine Abbey of Maria Laach, which has just celebrated its fiftieth anniversary.

Actually, Maria Laach was founded in the German Rhineland in 1093, but in 1802 Napoleon suppressed it along with all the other monasteries of the Low Countries and the Rhineland. In 1892, however, monks of the Beuron Congregation, already liturgically minded, re-established the ancient abbey, and in 1913 Dom Ildefons Herwegen was elected abbot. Under this great monk's leadership Maria Laach went into high gear in promotion of things liturgical. The first Liturgical Week was held in 1914, but the war put a quietus on the movement for a time. In the post-war period a number of publications were started, notably *Die Betende Kirche* (*The Praying Church*), in all of which Abbott Herwegen and his monks stated and explained and extolled the essentials of Catholic liturgy, not only as performed in the Church, but also as applied to Church art and to social and family life.

The Catholic Youth Movement of Germany found a center there. Catholic employers and employees held conferences at Maria Laach and discussed their problems in the light of an integral and vital Christian faith. Many priests and religious from abroad, including many Americans, journeyed to Maria Laach to attend the liturgical academy which Abbott Herwegen opened in 1932.

On its fiftieth anniversary the modern Maria Laach finds itself under a heavy damper, but it is nevertheless one of the few German monasteries still in operation. "The buildings have been converted into an army hospital. The few monks and brothers who have not been drafted into the army are allowed to live in some small rooms under the roof. With his spirit undaunted, Abbot Herwegen uses the time Providence has again granted him to finish a long-cherished project of writing a commentary on the Rule of Saint Benedict, thus laying foundations for the period of reconstruction to come." (From an article by Damasus Winzen, O.S.B., in *Orate Fratres* for January 24, 1943.) In any case we can be grateful that there are in America monks of Maria Laach, particularly at St. Paul's Priory in Keyport, N. J., and others, like Father H. A. Reinhold, who have been schooled in that abbey, and these can be counted on to continue the glorious tradition of a living liturgy.

CONTRIBUTORS

Harry SYLVESTER, author of "Dearly Beloved," writes for *Collier's* and other magazines. He has lived in New Mexico, and is a friend of Haniel Long. He frequently contributes articles and book reviews to THE COMMONWEAL.

John C. CORT has been a reporter on the *Brookline Citizen*, member of the *Catholic Worker* staff in New York, an editor of the *Labor Leader*. He is one of the founders of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, and for a short time was an organizer for the ILGWU, AFL. He has now joined the editorial staff of THE COMMONWEAL.

James W. LANE has just published a book on Whistler. He has written for *Art News* and the New York *Sun*, and has lectured at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Margaret BYARD is a student of music who frequently contributes book reviews to THE COMMONWEAL.

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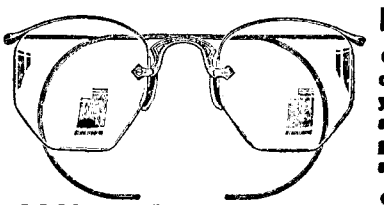

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